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SOLDIERS OF V CORPS INFANTRY TASK FORCE HELP CREATE BALAD 'NERVE CENTER' FOR ELECTIONS

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FORWARD OPERATING BASE PALIWODA, Iraq —Soldiers from V Corps' Task Force 1st Battalion, 77th Armor, 1st Infantry Division, spent months working with the Balad city council here to create a Joint coordination Center here that served as a 'nerve center' for the city during Iraq's recent elections.

Soldiers of Task Force 1-77 worked with council members to prepare liaisons from law enforcement; the Iraqi army; the Balad Emergency Services Department; local radio stations and newspapers; the water and electrical department, and the administration of health to respond at a moment's notice to any crisis.

"The JCC was used during the elections and acted as a hub for the mayor so he would be able to know what is going on in his city," said 1st Lt. John P. J. DeRosa of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1-77th.

"Right now it will be used more for terrorist activity and sending out the security forces, but it will eventually be used for natural disaster response," said DeRosa.

It was designed to be an emergency service center like the 911 response centers in the U.S., he said.

"We have spent more than \$325,000 in preparing this building," said Capt. Jason Goodfriend, 1-77th civil affairs officer. "It's the most technologically advanced building in this area."

The JCC in Balad is one of many in place around Iraq equipped with multiple phone lines, emergency back-up power, and access to local and national media, which will be in constant contact with one another, he added.

"We have to be focused with our spending and build what they need. This will also help them to be able to take advantage of being able to sustain themselves after we leave," Goodfriend said.

